REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-11 and 23-52 are now pending, with claims 1-4, 6, and 9 amended, with claims 11-22 cancelled, and with claims 23-52 added. No new matter is introduced (see, e.g., claims 1-22, as previously pending, and FIGs. 1-6 and description in Applicant's disclosure thereof). Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

The present Office Action rejects claims 1-5, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §101, as being directed to non-statutory subject matter, rejects claims 1, 2, and 4-11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 20020032612 to *Williams et al.*, and rejects claims 3, and 12-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being obvious over *Williams et al.* in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 20020065738 to *Riggs et al.*

In response to the rejection of claims 1-5, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §101, as being directed to non-statutory subject matter, claims 1-4, 6, and 9 have been amended to correct the noted and discovered informalities and so as to be in further compliance with 35 U.S.C. §101. No new matter is introduced. Accordingly, all of the pending claims are in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 101 and no further rejection on such a basis is anticipated. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive a mutually satisfactory solution.

The pending claims are patentably distinguishable over *Williams et al.*, and *Riggs et al.*, because *Williams et al.*, and *Riggs et al.*, alone or in combination, fail to teach, disclose or suggest all of the features recited in the pending claims. For example, independent claim 1, as amended (emphasis added), recites:

> 1. A computer-implemented method for facilitating **shipment and return of a package containing items** from a Sender to a Recipient, the method comprising the steps of:
>
> **electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package**, in a database;
>
> electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for **tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender**, from a shipping mechanism;
>
> electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database;
>
> **electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package**; and

> **permitting an authorized user to query the database for facilitating the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package.**

new independent claim 33 (emphasis added) recites:

> 33. A computer-implemented system for facilitating **shipment and return of a package containing items** from a Sender to a Recipient, the system comprising:
>
> means for **electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package**, in a database;
>
> means for electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for **tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender**;
>
> means for electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database;
>
> means for **electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package**; and
>
> means for **permitting an authorized user to query the database for facilitating the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package.**

Thus, the pending independent claims 1 and 33 are directed to a novel method and system for facilitating **shipment and return** of a package containing items, wherein, advantageously, everything can be to tied to the contents (i.e., items) of a package being shipped, by **correlating package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, with shipment tracking data for the package**. Advantageously, "returns can be handled on an item-by-item basis, rather than on a shipment-by-shipment basis," "items are correlated to an accurate description thereof to facilitate customs clearance of each item," and "[e]ach package, and each item in each package, can be tracked and the results made available over a network, such as the Internet" (see, e.g., Specification, p. 4, ¶ [0017]). None of the applied references teach or suggest the noted features or advantages of the inventions recited in claims 1 and 33.

For example, *Williams et al.* merely deals with returns, which is only a part of the inventions recited in claims 1 and 33. *Riggs et al.* also fails teach or suggest the noted features or advantages of the inventions recited in claims 1 and 33. Accordingly, the

inventions recited in claims 1 and 33 are patentably distinguishable over *Williams et al.*, and *Riggs et al.*, alone or in combination.

In addition, prior art shipping companies normally treat individual packages as the important units, and are not concerned with the contents in terms of their shipping processes. The inventions recited in claims 1 and 33, on the other hand, care primarily about the package contents, and track each item in a given package throughout the shipping process and , if necessary, throughout a returns process.

Further, as compared with the system of *Williams et al.*, a returns process of the inventions recited in claims 1 and 33, advantageously, need not employ further participation from the company that shipped the goods, as the items in each package are tracked and correlated, and a return can be processed without having to integrate with an order system of the shipper, with a customer who received and returned the goods simply filling out a form accompanying the returned goods.

The dependent claims are allowable over *Williams et al.*, and *Riggs et al.*, alone or in combination, on their on merits and for at least the reasons as argued above with respect to independent claims 1 and 33.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. However, if the Examiner deems that any issue remains after considering this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney to expedite the prosecution and engage in a joint effort to work out a mutually satisfactory solution.

Respectfully submitted,

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